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granted that a woman may fulfil these functions emphasizes the high status that women have enjoyed in Ruanda society. It is tempting to regard their status as a consequence of the economic responsibilities of the polygynous wives when replacing their husbands.

Besides this form of economic collaboration, wives, in nuclear as well as in polygynous families, had to perform certain economic tasks within the rugo. The activities which belonged exclusively to the wife, though she was sometimes helped by her daughters and certain other females were, for women of any caste: cleaning and brushing the hut and the enclosure, milk churning, and basket-making. In addition to these, Tutsi women made particular objects in basket-work (such as screens used in the hut, very finely woven plates, &c.), butter perfumed with the wood of a certain tree *umubavu* (such butter was used as a cosmetic), and garments in bead work. Hutu women had to cook and to apportion food. In agriculture their particular tasks were to sow and plant, to grind sorghum, and to sift peas. Twa women simply cooked.

The husband's contributions to the economic activities of the compound were, among the Tutsi, cattle-rearing and hunting (for the hides and skins); among the Hutu, hut-building, minding cattle (if they had any), felling the bush, and usually all the agricultural tasks requiring considerable physical strength. Moreover, they prepared bark-cloth and skins and forged iron implements. Among the Twa, husbands hunted and made bows and iron weapons.

The principles underlying this division of economic tasks exclusively performed by males or females were according to informants that men should carry out tasks which either were particularly hard, or required intelligence, had to be performed far from the compound, or were thought 'noble'.

Most other duties could be performed by men or women and were shared between husband and wife according to individual arrangements. Such activities were, for instance, in the case of the Tutsi: watching labourers working in the fields, and supervising them, doing menial tasks such as mending the enclosure, milking the cows or looking after the herds. For the Hutu they were: harvesting, brewing beer, drawing water, cutting and collecting wood, lighting and maintaining fires, making mats and baskets, &c. For the Twa: pot-making and brewing beer.